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ABSTRACT

This document provides an overview of a survey of child care planning advisory groups in 14 cities that was conducted in December, 1991 and January, 1992. The survey sought to identify major issues related to community-based planning for child care services in Ontario, Canada. After discussing the background and history of child care planning, outlining the method for the study, and providing an overview of the results, the document presents a case study of each of the 14 planning groups. Many of the groups studied indicated that four major factors have contributed to a change in conditions surrounding child care planning. The factors are: (1) a socio-economic and political climate typified by scarce resources; (2) recognition of a need for provinces and communities to work together; (3) evidence of progress in the ability and willingness of child care and children's services groups to agree on priorities; and (4) the increasing importance of the child care issue in local political agendas. The report notes innovations that have come from the groups. (ME)

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Models for Local Planning

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Models for Local Planning
Community Case Studies of Child Care Planning Groups

This background paper reviews the experience of a number of community-based planning groups, in order to identify some key consultation questions in the area of community-based planning for child care services. Suggested questions are outlined in this document, and were drawn thematically from the experience of these groups, and reviewed specifically in consultation with the local group chairs and other group members, Ministry of Community and Social Services program supervisors, and community development workers. The Ministry wishes to thank all those who participated in these discussions. A list of their names is included as an appendix in this report.

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BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Ontario's Child Care Reform Consultation, announced by the Minister of Community and Social Services on February 17, 1992, will address many issues of concern to parents and the child care community. While the consultation paper, *Setting the Stage*, is broad in scope, this paper focusses on community-based planning for child care services in Ontario. This report was prepared to further our thinking about that planning, and to illustrate current planning activities and issues in the child care sector.

Historically, the importance of local planning has always been emphasized as critical to the successful development of child care services. The *Day Care Policy: Background Paper*, published by the Ministry of Community and Social Services in 1981, stated two major reasons that local government and community agencies should continue to play a central role in planning and developing child care services: diverse needs exist across the province; and local communities could best determine and plan for these needs. Consequently, the Ministry began involving municipalities and community agencies in the planning and provision of child care services.

Community-based planning was further emphasized in the policy direction outlined in *New Directions for Child Care* (1987). This initiative also supported flexibility and choice for parents, increased commitment to community development both to identify local needs and preferences and strengthen communities, attention to individual, regional, and cultural differences, and funding for the expansion or development of child care services that were responsive to local community circumstances. The support and funding available under *New Directions* was a key in the later development of many planning groups and initial needs assessments in many communities.

At present, very little information has been gathered at the provincial level about the experience of planning groups or the planning models adopted. One recent effort to address this need for information was the commissioning of a study of recent community planning and consultation efforts conducted in Ontario. This review, entitled *Community Perspectives on Child Care in Ontario,* examined 55 reports by community groups and summarized the methods used and the emerging themes in the local planning process. At present, no formal networking opportunity exists for such groups to trade information and ideas, or to seek support and advice.

However, there is a recognition that the development of many child care services in Ontario since 1987 would not have occurred without the voluntary planning contribution made by these groups. Many of them have been a catalyst for networking among the child care services in their own localities, for overseeing research to identify community child care needs, for estimating the demand for various types of child care services, and for making recommendations to the provincial government on the need for various types and levels of services.

This paper was developed to begin addressing our need for information about how these planning efforts have proceeded by examining a series of basic questions. What is the configuration of these groups? Who sits on them? How did they get started? Did they receive any support for their planning activity? What, if any, obstacles did they face in their planning? What might have further supported them in their activities? What lessons can we draw from their best practices, for example in developing or using information systems to predict demand for child care services or for encouraging a cost-effective approach to planning? What future plans do they have that might interest other groups?

Most importantly, how can the experience and lessons of these groups further contribute to the development of a quality, accessible, and affordable system of child care in Ontario?

Relevant Principles of Community-Based Planning

The issue of social services planning at the community level is not a new concept. Over the years, the Ministry has recognized that a number of principles of community-based planning were consistently relevant: participation in decision-making which affects people residing in communities of Ontario, the effectiveness of involving people with a real stake in their own communities, the importance of collaboration and partnerships at the local level, the ability of good planning activities to strengthen and support communities, and the potential positive impacts on setting policy direction and service priorities province-wide. Most importantly, this approach has always been viewed as critical to the development of a cohesive service network that reflects comunity priorities.

However, Ministry progress on determining the specifics of the planning role and relationship with the community has been incremental, and a number of key questions still need to be addressed, which affect child care and other human service planning as well. Some of these questions have been raised in previous MCSS initiatives and reports:

Pathways to Social Planning (1975): a consultation document
Children's Services Committees (1979): testing of models for local planning and advisory committees

Ministry Planning Forum (1988): provincial conference on community planning

Other Regional Planning Forums (1988-): mandates, responsibilities, duties, supports

Report of the Provincial Municipal Social Services Review (1990): jurisdictional roles and responsibility questions

Better Beginnings, Better Futures (1990): principles of community-based planning as they relate to early intervention and prevention.

The reader is advised to refer to these if further background or context is required on concepts of community-based planning.

METHOD FOR THIS STUDY

A snowball sampling technique was used, which involved identifying a number of planning groups from various regions in Ontario, with an emphasis on those currently facing issues or experiences related to community planning for child care. These contacts were asked whether they knew of other groups with similar purposes and functions.

A telephone interview schedule was developed and reviewed by Ministry staff. This survey instrument is included as Appendix A. The consultation questions outlined in this document were reviewed by all respondents, and revisions were made in line with their comments.[1] The interviews were conducted in December 1991 and January 1992.

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

A number of thematic issues relevant to the Child Care Reform Consultation were raised by the respondents from the planning groups, as well as by MCSS program supervisors. These are summarized below.

Planning groups are recognizing that a new climate for child care planning has recently developed. Many case study groups commented that four major factors are contributing to this shift:

1. a changing socio-economic and political climate typified by scarcer resources and greater demands for efficiency. In addition, the recession has dramatically changed the profile of local needs[2];

2. a greater recognition of how critical it is for the province and communities to "pull together";

3. some evidence of progress in the ability and willingness of both child care and children's services groups to find common ground on coming to a consensus on local needs and priorities; and

4. the fact that, for a number of reasons, the child care issue is rising on local political agendas.

There is a high consensus on the need for planning of child care services at the local level, and a clear and strong signal that communities support this activity.

There is a less clear environment for making planning decisions, given the tensions that exist in the current system. Some of these include the difficulty of establishing new boards of directors while providing ongoing support and monitoring, the difficulty of responding to immediate requests when groups are making short-term decisions and long-term plans at the same time, and the difficulty of making decisions on these plans, proposals and priorities when the impacts of the current economy on funding availability and provincial direction are unclear.

Despite the momentum gained on child care, most of the study groups are planning in an isolated fashion, with very little information about the activities of other groups. Most felt they are "starting from scratch" in establishing planning forums, and did not know where to go for information. As a result, they have been independently developing methods and approaches that other jurisdictions are also working on (e.g., approaches to culturally sensitive programming). Many have indicated that it would be helpful to have access to the experience or products of similar planning groups, such as needs assessments or strategic plans, or to have materials to teach them the fundamentals of planning.

Of the groups we spoke to, only two have structured themselves to focus exclusively on child care planning. Their perception was that it is important to establish strength in the child care planning stream before any integration is considered. The remaining groups act as independent or subcommittee arms of integrated children's services planning groups. Their membership consists of service providers from commercial and non-profit centres, Early Childhood Educators, and representatives of health, education and social service agencies with attention to special issues such as special needs and family violence. Parents are usually represented, but in varying proportions. Some groups have intentionally added other important perspectives by including local politicians, employers interested in workplace child care, and school boards.

Only a few of the represented organizations have vested their "interdisciplinary" members with decision-making authority on the subcommittees. In some cases, working agreements are negotiated to provide this authority.

The groups have taken a fairly consistent path of structuring committees (either with the Ministry or another agency taking the lead), conducting needs assessments (often with the assistance of consultants or community development staff hired on short-term grants) and working towards strategic plans and action/ implementation steps. However, their lessons are often not shared across other service sectors or with those in child care in other jurisdictions.

For example, some have discovered the importance of establishing a steering committee prior to conducting needs assessments, finding that the time is well spent as it speeds up later team building and implementation efforts. Others have developed needs assessment methodologies and approaches while the same are being redeveloped independently in other

jurisdictions. Others are developing interesting training packages for staff and board development. Some others have developed replicable and fair procedures for reviewing proposals.

Despite a variation in the degree of "hands-on" involvement by MCSS staff with committees, there is a general agreement that the committees themselves are not in a position to make final funding decisions, and should retain their present advisory and planning functions. Their role generally consists of reviewing proposals, setting priorities and making funding recommendations. A few reasons have been offered for this view, one being that it is difficult for committee members to remain impartial and not raise conflict-of-interest concerns when other providers are often on the committees. Another reason given is that they prefer to let the Ministry bear the responsibility for final decisions, and finally, that they are not experienced enough to make such decisions.[3] Furthermore, the lack of reliable information systems makes it difficult to set local priorities and predict future demand when indicators of need are out of date, unavailable, or not centralized.

Progress is being made on new research and analytical approaches useful for improving the state of the art of needs assessment methodologies, although there is a wide range of experience in handling grants. This information is clearly not being shared between communities. For example, most of the jurisdictions have conducted needs assessments, but not all have followed through on implementation planning. Some have developed interesting methodological approaches which are providing solid data for their committees; for example, parent education surveys, surveys of other sectors' (e.g. business and labour) perspectives on child care needs, community-based focus groups of parents, demographic reviews, and new computer-based demographic projection models for predicting future demand for child care services.

Some very exciting innovations have come from these groups, including:

- conducting reviews of other groups' planning activities and products;
- consolidating and centralizing all directories and reports;
- creating maps showing locations of centres in large regions;

- establishing 1-800 Help Lines for parents wishing to locate care;
- developing integrated referral systems for emergency care;
- designing early problem identification kits;
- developing fact sheets on emerging trends and various consolidated training packages for boards and operators (e.g., manuals for new operators, orientation, quality assurance, setting up non-profit boards);
- conducting awareness and education campaigns (e.g., for the Week of the Child in October 1992);
- establishing mental health child care support teams;
- setting up school-based committees with high involvement from parents; and
- creating liaison committees with educators to promote the transition from pre-school to school.

Overall, there is strong evidence that integrated planning is the wave of the future, with many examples of its value to local communities. A number of the groups provided examples of their accomplishments in minimizing duplication of effort, smoothing transitions, and emphasizing prevention:

- improving quality of service delivery;
- more efficient use of staff time;
- sharing information about staff availability;
- establishing umbrella approved corporations
- using negotiated agreements to redirect service dollars to improve parent support and relief;
- cost-saving measures to collaborate on staff/board development activities;

- bulk buying of supplies and services;
- making subsidies portable across groups of centres;
- cooperating with schools in planning transitions from pre-school to school;
- working with local health agencies to consolidate demographic projections; and
- collaborating with local health, education, and municipal planners.

The broad consensus was that this type of planning, over time, can reduce ownership barriers, further promote the interests of the community, and promote collaboration between the child care and education constituencies.

Integrated planning could be assisted if some obstacles were removed. For example, one group focused on dedicated child care planning because funds were more easily available through an MCSS program funding stream. The barriers to obtaining funding for integrated planning at both provincial and federal levels were seen as a disincentive to integration of approaches.

Another group pointed out barriers in the provincial Planning Act which created problems in incorporating child care provisions into new plans for subdivisions. The current structure of one-time or short-term funding for community development assistance and for planning funds also makes it difficult for groups to strengthen their planning capacity. Some were of the opinion that baseline funding would be required.
Although most groups are not vested with decision-making authority by their "parent" organizations, there are future plans to:

- improve the planning linkages to mental health, health, education, and other social service sectors;
- begin to conduct linked strategic planning activities;
- conduct more special interest programming on topics like family violence and assault; and

- have greater input into provincial consultation forums where work and family issues are addressed.

THE CASE STUDIES

In this section, we outline some of the key experiences and issues raised in discussion with each child care planning group. An effort has been made to highlight particular issues, rather than report every response to our questionnaire (See Appendix A).

I. START-UP GROUPS

Case Study #1: Pembroke and Area Children's Services Planning Committee
A group at the preliminary start-up stage.

At present, the Pembroke area has only one child care centre, one resource centre, a half-day nursery school, and no regulated home child care agencies. A brand-new group is currently laying the groundwork for the establishment of a new community-based planning activity, and is as yet unsure whether the geographic area of Renfrew County will be included in its planning. Decisions about membership criteria, mandate and structure remain to be dealt with by the committee.

Pembroke is one of the few localities in the province with no municipal support for child care. The child care centre, which has 95 spaces, is an approved corporation and thus must pay the 20% municipal portion, which it does through local fund-raising efforts.

At present, the committee members are devoting their time to determining their broad mandate and role. Given their lack of experience with this kind of planning, they describe their experience as tremendously difficult to "start from scratch." One problem they likely share with other groups in Ontario is feeling that "[we] didn't know enough about this to know what kind of information we should be asking for from other communities, or from MCSS." Consequently, committee members contacted planning groups in Lanark and Kingston to ask for written descriptions of their mandate and structure, and sought out information on a tri-county project in

northern Ontario. This North Bay model covers three designated districts, each of which has its own planning chairperson. This approach resulted in a clear pattern of proposal review, centralized and updated needs-based indicators, a formal strategic plan, and a number of integrated projects and planning. In addition, the North Bay committees ensured that they received training in planning cycles and grant applications from others experienced in this area.

In the spring of 1991, the local MCSS program supervisor approached a number of people in the community to advise that a group was needed to help set child care priorities for the community. It was felt that not only was a decision framework a good idea, but resources were scarce and community input was needed since not all requests could be fulfilled. Not unlike the reports from many area offices, the Ministry was receiving individual, isolated funding requests and expansion proposals and recognized a need to provide a consistent rationale for decisions.

Early in their discussions, the committee recognized that every service area had a demand for resources, and all applicants saw their needs as immediate. "No one was prepared to choose at that point, so we tried to find out what the government priorities were, and it looked to us that this wasn't at all clear.... We really couldn't tell what the provincial goals or climate for funding were. So, we were lucky in that one of our members, who had helped set up the original North Bay model, explained about their long-range plan that ensures every proposal fits in with some broader goals, and also mentioned that they had borrowed some ideas from Kingston. We weren't sure these approaches would work for us, so we went back to the MCSS program supervisor, and he said what we would need is a strategic plan for child care in this area. The only problem is that we didn't know where to begin."

As a first step, the committee hired a consultant to conduct a child care needs assessment. With $7500 donated by the Family Enrichment Network, a service agency with membership on this committee, the consultants contacted users and suppliers of child care, and determined that their primary need was for more regulated home child care. They also conducted a parent education survey, which told the Family Enrichment Network that parents do not want to go out to hear guest speakers for information on special topics, but would rather stay at home and receive that type of information on television

or radio. A future child care needs survey is planned, and will be supported by the Kiwanis, another group represented on the committee.

The committee is now at a point where they are reluctant to make decisions unless they know whether funds will be available. While they would rather recommend service priorities than make allocation decisions, they doubt they can perform a useful function for the community if funding resources are not available.

As a "next step" the committee will collaborate with the MCSS area office to begin working on a solid planning approach. (Follow-up: After these interviews, the Mayor of Pembroke announced his intention to form a "Mayor's Children's Services Council, a one-stop committee for all children's services in the community, including child care issues". The committee believes their function is now obsolete, and plan to approach the Council to ask for representation. However, they also believe that child care needs will be incompletely addressed in this broader planning forum, so the committee may continue to meet to discuss issues specific to child care.)

Case Study #2: Durham College Child Care Advisory Committee
A model of an advisory committee established to oversee design and administration of a child care community needs assessment.

In anticipating long-term planning needs for Durham Region, the MCSS area office approached the Early Childhood Education department of Durham College to propose using a small existing advisory group as the core of a larger planning committee. High initial involvement by key players was seen as critical, given reports from other communities that omitting this step could lead to lengthy organizing times and greater obstacles in team-building.

The 20-member committee, which included parents, representatives of both school boards, members of a nannies' organization, ECE instructors, and children's services supervisors, staff and agency representatives met 10 times over a period of 15 months. After preparing a terms of reference and receiving over 20 tenders, a consultant was selected who then engaged in a number of activities on

behalf of the committee. These included the development of fact sheets on emerging trends, committee orientation to project management, a demographic review, a child care needs assessment questionnaire for child care professionals, child care boards, employers and parents, a telephone survey of parents and a focus group with over 200 participants.

The committee recently hosted a public meeting to review the results of the needs assessment and to outline an implementation plan. Important information was obtained on the community's 30% vacancy rate, growing waiting lists for subsidized care and increased utilization of unregulated care. Despite the serious impact of the current recession on these issues, this community, which covers seven localities, is in strong shape with respect to availability of child care services. The committee has determined that an appropriate future goal will be to promote collaboration between the child care and education sectors. In addition, the committee recognizes the need to promote understanding of child care issues among political representatives.

Immediate plans include working to build a network of child care representatives, and establish a formal link to an existing Children's Services Advisory Group. The current recessionary situation, in which many non-profit centres are on the verge of closing and vacancies in licensed facilities have increased fourfold in the past six months, has led the committee to consider efficiency measures such as the consolidation of training for boards of directors and operators.

Other data which emerged from their research will provide a focus for unified strategic planning activity, an emphasis now seen as critical by the committee. One of the interesting findings of the survey was that child care professionals identified "understanding policies" as their top priority, despite the existence of professional associations that one might expect to have provided this type of information. In their words, it is very difficult for the front line staff to interpret information, to distinguish what is pertinent, and to keep abreast of provincial policy developments.

Case Study #3: City of London Short-Term Advisory Group on Child Care Planning
An interim, stand-alone planning group established to consolidate and conduct new research on local needs and provincial planning models.

The City of London, with a population of 300,000, has approximately 150 child care centres, 2 regulated home child care agencies, and approximately 10 resource centres or resource teacher programs. Consistent with reports from other communities, London's vacancy rate is unusually high. As of January 1992, there were 250 vacancies in licensed care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, and a subsidy waiting list numbering 150.

In the fall of 1989, the local MCSS area office organized and led this committee in order to consolidate and plan with existing and new research on local child care needs. The latter research effort also directly targeted parents. In addition, in 1991 this committee undertook an MCSS-funded inventory of the models and activities of other child care planning groups across the province, in an effort to use their experiences as a foundation for its own planning.

While the members of this group are not formally representing their organizations on the committee, the membership includes a wide variety of child care and children's service agencies, as well as members of ECE Ontario, the ECE program at their local college, the District Health Council, an employer-supported child care centre, one local school board, and a special needs advisory committee.

At present, this community has compiled and distributed a community report on this research, titled "Child Care Planning in London." This document was released in the summer of 1991, and a timetable of nine months has been set for dissemination and feedback. While the committee awaits this input, it has recognized the value of centralizing and consolidating what turned out to be a considerable amount of information about local child care needs, the result of over a decade of information gathering in the community. The committee also discussed how to minimize some of the difficulties of having many pre-existing coordinating groups with overlapping membership.

Case Study #4: Fort William First Nation Band Day Care Centre Committee
An advisory committee to a Band Council doing start-up planning for the community's first child care facility.

Fort William First Nation is a reserve with a population of 900, many of whom are working parents who either take their children into Thunder Bay for child care or rely on informal arrangements. For approximately two years, a subcommittee established by the Chief and Band Council has been engaged in start-up planning to establish the first child care centre (and service) on this reserve. It has some cross-appointments with another subcommittee of the Council devoted to child welfare issues, in order to ensure a broader view for its planning.

The planning group, comprised half of parents and half of children's service providers or agency representatives, sees its mandate as "striving to know we have a place for our children that we can say is based on our needs and the things we value for our families, including culture." The committee's central concern is the hope that all service development is culturally sensitive. They also wish to build a high level of trust and comfort among parent users, "a place where parents know they have a safe, learning environment for their children that supports traditional values." One of their planning challenges will be finding ways to overcome the fact that while they have many native peoples with good qualification in ECE and human services, they do not have indigenous staff who are experienced at operating centres.

In addition, they do not have ready access to a network of other native centres who could provide advice on start-up or culturally sensitive programming. In their case, they did know of one other program, the Herron Bay Day Care. This program, which has operated since 1976 and is strong on operating experience and reporting relationships to a band council, has unfortunately not yet provided services in their native tongue. In fact, the program is presently preparing to hire its first native teacher.

After doing some preliminary research with student employees, the group has just received a $7000 planning grant from the Ministry to develop a full needs assessment, hire a consultant to analyze the data, and for some developmental planning.

Long-term planning will present many obstacles, including keeping committee members with many other obligations on track. They also plan to hire an experienced operator for a short period of time to provide the start-up support they require, but fully intend to have a native-operated centre as their final outcome. While staff from the MCSS area office has been available for information and support, the committee recognizes the importance of its own community-based "learning curve." They wish that user-friendly planning materials were available to them, like "a book of simple steps a committee could go through in their planning."

II. STAND-ALONE GROUPS

Case Study #5: Peterborough Child Care Forum
A model of a stand-alone group

The Peterborough model is distinguished by the planning decision to develop a stand-alone dedicated model, on the basis that it was important to develop capacity and strength in the child care program stream. While a Children's Services Planning Group exists in this county of 165,000, it was felt that it was necessary to develop separate goals and objectives for a local child care system. After two years of implementation planning, the Forum is hoping that their focused approach will result in "the recognition of child care issues at all planning tables." However, to ensure that they meet the long-range objective of integrated planning for the well-being of all children, their vice-chair is now a member of the Children's Services Planning Group. This person has raised particular child care issues with the group, and many discussions, both formal and informal, have been held by the members of both committees.

Operating on a two-year implementation and planning grant from MCSS, the Forum's mandate involves "promoting and planning for quality, accessible (child) care for families who need it." An independent needs assessment commissioned by MCSS recommended the formation of a planning group of this nature. The consultant who had conducted the needs assessment led the first meeting in March of

1990, but the committee members found it somewhat difficult to get on with planning from a "cold start."

The committee divided its work across five subcommittees: special needs, school age, flexible models, professional development and administration. The first year was spent developing the committee's policies, procedures, and goals, and recommendations based on the needs assessment. The following year was devoted to the development of a strategic plan.

This community, with approximately 15 child care centres, 2 home child care agencies, one resource centre and two resource teacher programs, had few infant or school-age programs other than those available through the home child care agencies. A second concern was the aggregate loss of child care spaces over the past decade.

The two-year grant from the Ministry has been used to develop a mechanism to circulate information about professional development, issue and ratify a number of recommendations on flexible models, specify expectations for the location and sponsorship of services, and develop an integrated referral system for emergency care provided by an ECE in a resource centre. The committee reports that these successes have created a renewed impetus for future planning.

Most importantly, this committee has succeeded in making progress on a unified "community of child care interest" in a previously fragmented system. One positive outcome is their view of being "a place where people can get answers." However, they feel progress remains to be seen on clarifying the fit of their initiatives with provincial direction, and on gaining community acceptance of having one group responsible for all child care coordination.

The long-term issues of integrating the child care planning into wider community service planning still remain to be resolved. That agenda, based on the premise that good child care is good prevention, will have to reconcile the dedicated planning approach with a "mainstream" objective of promoting prevention, early intervention and risk reduction. This "mainstream" model may carry goals of redirecting funding to emphasize improved parent support and relief with family-centered child care in public, voluntary and neighbourhood systems.

III. INTEGRATED GROUPS

Case Study #6: Leeds-Grenville Children's Services Advisory Group
A model of a pre-existing children's services planning group who established a sub-committee structure to promote efficiencies and consolidate efforts.

Eighty-five thousand people live in the combined counties of Leeds-Grenville, an area currently served by 28 licensed child care programs: 12 day care centres, 7 nursery schools, and 9 after-school programs. In addition, three agencies supervise the activities of six resource centres serving the area. Despite the recent recession, there remains a high need for infant and part-time child care. The majority of the child care centres have waiting lists, and demand exceeds the supply of subsidized spaces.

A child care subcommittee of an existing, decade-old, integrated children's services planning group, which includes 21 agencies as members,[4] is currently preparing to publish a child care needs assessment. This process, which took approximately one year to complete, was initiated by the MCSS local area office. Because the subcommittee's work grew out of a desire to increase community involvement and coordinate existing child care programs, the process of conducting the needs assessment was cautiously paced by the newly elected subcommittee in a deliberate attempt to ensure that the research would meet their final objectives.

The subcommittee wanted to ensure that the terms of reference developed for the needs assessment would result in a concrete plan of action for the community, and discovered this was a painstaking process. It involved meeting almost every week for more than a year to negotiate terms and project budgets with their local MCSS office, plan for the early involvement of the community in what they viewed as the foundation of a strategic plan, and hire a consultant who they instructed to obtain "community feedback and direction". This feedback was operationalized as a mail-out survey of more than 400 respondents from business, labour, social agency, parent, and child care boards of directors, a telephone survey, and focus groups with parents.

The broader Children's Services Advisory Group (CSAG) worked on a complementary part of the mandate, which was to forge links across existing children's services. For example, a number of working agreements have been established with represented agencies which will give their members decision-making authority on committee decisions. This is particularly important, given the members' understanding that they will ultimately make recommendations to MCSS on funding allocations.

During this process, the Ministry staff adopted a "backseat" approach, supporting the committee but not participating in making decisions. In retrospect, both MCSS and the subcommittee approved of the effects this had, allowing the community to take greater ownership and creating a group strongly motivated to follow up on action plans and implementation. This planning will now be coordinated with health, municipal and educational planning.

The CSAG subcommittee also fulfills a vetting function, which the members recognize will have future significance as a clearinghouse to ensure that local needs are met with the least duplication. It was the creation of the perception that this could be a credible, non-partisan centre for consultation on proposals and ideas that one member described as the group's greatest challenge.

This group is already making new plans to engage in the next step of priority setting. They are also working to consolidate and centralize all local child care directories, reports and studies, and are collaborating with the local District Health Unit on a demand model based on demographic growth predictions. In addition, they have moved on to two new projects: a family violence resource library has been established, and they have just received funding for a sexual assault program, initiated with a local hospital.

Case Study #7: Lanark County Child Care Planning Group
A model of a county-wide planning body with a community development focus for urban and rural areas with diverse needs.

In 1989, the MCSS area office, assisted by a Study Task Force pulled together from a subcommittee of an existing generic Children's Services Coordination and Planning Group, conducted a planning

study relating to child care needs for the County of Lanark. The study was requested by the Coordination and Planning Group and supported by a part-time MCSS-funded research/community development worker. The county has a population of approximately 51,800 distributed equally in urban and rural areas. It has four towns of 6,000 to 10,000 persons, and two villages of about 1,000.

MCSS enlisted the help of the Study Task Force to organize a new planning group dedicated to child care and hire a full-time community development worker to assist in implementing recommendations of the study.[5] This committee, in conjunction with an ECE committee of the Children's Services Coordination and Planning Group, received funding for a one-year community development position, and had the funding for this position extended for the short term.

The worker acted as staff support to this subcommittee of parents, informal caregivers, the reeve of a township, and child care service providers and professionals. They have not developed guidelines for membership, but will likely do so in the future.

This committee, like others with which we have communicated, found the initial process of getting established and interpreting their mandate "slow going." In the one year since the initial planning was done, they have set service priorities for the county and conducted meetings with potential providers making applications, reviewed service proposals, and made recommendations to MCSS on service funding decisions.

Like many other groups, they understand how these allocation and efficiency issues are difficult to address in situations where the availability of "hard and clear" data about local child care needs is highly variable, unavailable or not centralized, especially given the population distribution and variation in fees in this county. Thus, they place a high value on the information they have collected and centralized. This group is not planning for a consistent need which further raises the need for good information; in one centre they have a long waiting list, whereas in another there are high vacancies due to the need for subsidies (the rural areas of the county are not served by any centres).

While the group has had very positive comments from potential providers about being able to come to such a forum with a proposal,

this presents some frustration for the committee, since the availability of funding continues to be uncertain. The group finds it difficult to make decisions about short term projects without the context of a long range strategic plan and secure funding. The early planning study had issued one community development challenge, which was that there was a high need to raise community awareness about child care issues such as quality, work and family.

In the interim, the planning group has developed plans to maintain their impetus until there is more clarity in provincial funding policy. For example, they have decided to develop an awareness campaign leading up to the Week of the Child in October 1992. They plan to brainstorm with the community at large, including politicians, on child care issues and the importance of quality care, the availability of options, and the importance of supporting parents in expressing their child care needs.

Case Study #8: County of Frontenac and City of Kingston Children's Services Coordination and Advisory Group
A standing committee of the Interagency Council for Children, an existing Children's Services Advisory Group

This three-year-old subcommittee of a well-established, integrated children's services group exists to plan for the needs of a very diverse geographic area which has a significant amount of variation. For example, while Kingston and the southern portion of the county are generally well served, even this area still requires infant and "special circumstances" spaces and emergency or short-notice care. Representation on this committee includes non-profit centres, consumers, informal child care providers, for-profit centres, special needs agencies, educators and approved corporations.

The county itself has a combined population of 125,000. The area is served by approximately 40 child care centres and nursery schools, 3 organizations responsible for 70 family day homes, two resource centres and two child care centres staffed with family resource staff. The county has 600 before and after school spaces in approximately 40 schools. They also have mobile community living programs staffed by itinerant resource teachers.

Since its establishment, the subcommittee has retained its original advisory, non-priority-setting role and reporting relationship to the children's services group. As originally intended, the larger group has final decision authority, while MCSS retains responsibility for funding decisions and priority setting. Given the larger group's focus on both mental health and children's service issues, the intent was for an integrated and preventive approach which would position child care decisions in a broader context. One committee member commented: "I think their larger scope helps. For example, their view really helped expand a response to 'The Early Years' consultation document our group had worked on. For another example, we've been trying to define for one year how we would evaluate proposals for service or research against needs assessment information. At this point, we feel ready to take on that task and have even considered sending out flyers to advise of our new capacity."

The influence of the interagency council has been demonstrated in other significant ways. The credibility of the larger group allows them to pose this subcommittee as a reputable community support group. In addition, the high variation in service need in different areas of the county is easier to plan for when all geographic areas are fully represented on the larger committee, as it has been difficult to duplicate this representation in the smaller group. Finally, the larger committee has served as a stabilizer, although the child care committee, like so many others, has had difficulties in establishing a clear direction and understanding of how their choices position alongside those of the province. They too experienced the growing pains described in many of the case studies presented here.

However, some significant yardsticks have been advanced by this group. First, they have continued to monitor interagency information provided by the larger committee, and feel this is having a very positive influence on their interdisciplinary and integrated understanding of issues. Second, they have compiled a demographic study of indicators of child care needs, and are working to keep that information updated so it remains pertinent to their planning. Third, they have developed a reviewer's vetting process to demonstrate to the community that vested interests will not interfere with the fair consideration of proposals. To this end, they have settled on a process for meeting face to face with individuals who submit proposals, and will implement this approach in the very near future.

However, their approach still delimits their decision-making role; in their view, it is very important that MCSS retain the final say.

Finally, they have started to host brown-bag lunches to share information. As one respondent observed, "We see at our level that we all desperately need new innovations in child care, and working to consensus is a very difficult but a very important step towards that end. The government is reflecting that same issue now by being involved in a consultation."

Case Study #9: North Hastings Children's Services Board
A community that has amalgamated numerous services under one incorporated board in order to better meet community needs.

The northern, central and southern areas of this county have a high degree of diversity in both geographic distribution and child care needs. While the 13 townships in the northern area of this county have reached a community consensus that good, affordable, accessible child care is essential for today's family, there remains an interesting amount of variation in how those needs are addressed in the southern and central areas.

The northern area of Hastings County has a population of approximately 16,500 people. The North Area Children's Services Board oversees a regulated home child care agency, a resource centre, and a developmental pre-school program, in addition to one relatively new child care centre, all housed under one roof. The combined budgets for their four major programs amount to approximately $200,000 annually. The group receives no planning funds from any source. The Board has attempted to ensure its membership includes parent user representatives from all of their service areas, as well as elected officials from the municipality and county.

This is also a community of changing need. At the time the above mentioned services were amalgamated (based on the recommendation of a 1988 needs assessment), the demand for infant care was high, and there was also a perceived need for regulated home child care. Demand in these areas is now lower than it was three years ago,

attributable to lack of subsidies, recessionary effects, and demographic changes in the county. Many unemployed residents can no longer afford licensed care, and there are serious transportation problems for rural families who wish to use the child care centre in Bancroft, particularly when one parent works and takes the family car. However, the overall demand for the centre-based care is increasing.

A community development worker was hired by the North Hastings Children's Services Steering Committee, which pre-dated the existing board by three years. This interim committee was formed in partnership with MCSS. On behalf of the steering committee, the community development worker approached the county's 13 townships and received a clear mandate on the high need for child care. This was later articulated by the Board members as a mandate of establishing a "decentralized, quality, comprehensive system." It has been further refined to a long-term goal of striving to "establish and maintain an organic, multi-delivery system of child care which by the adaptation to vital economic, demographic and socio-economic realities will be made affordable, with access to all North Hastings families and children in need of such a support system."

In addition, strong support for the construction of the child care centre described above was received. The steering committee took little time to raise their required 5% share of capital development funds for that centre, and contributions were made by many of the existing small boards.

The impacts of this integrated planning for child care are described by our respondents as "enormous." Specific impacts on the quality of service and delivery, on cost-saving measures such as reducing waste on the purchase of supplies and services, on more effective use of staff time, and on achieving a broader orientation in staff perspectives are all reported as noticeable outcomes. Staff performance evaluations have also demonstrated that better management leads to better quality of service. In addition, new nursery school and regulated home child care have not only been created, but are accessible to rural residents. Future plans for the group are ready for review by their board, however, these were unavailable at this time of reporting.

Case Study #10: Child Care Coordinating Committee, North York Interagency and Community Council
A subcommittee of an integrated children's services planning group in a large municipality.

North York has a population of 543,000. Specific child care services include 176 licensed child care centres, 5 home child care agencies and 6 resource centres. Many of the non-profit centres are school-based. In addition, several supervisors support groups exist, which are geographic or issue based.

The North York Interagency and Community Council (NYIACC) is a planning body that engages with the broader community to plan for the many needs of the residents of that city. The NYIACC structure allows for planning on a variety of issues categorized by age, such as children's or adults' services, or broad social issues such as cross-culturalism or housing. Because these categories are broad, much of the work of one committee is tied to that of another. For example, the work of the child care committee is prepared in collaboration with the work of the Cross-Cultural Committee to ensure that all the committee's work reflects the needs of a highly multicultural community.

The Child Care Coordinating Committee is a subcommittee of the Children's Services committee. Over the past ten years of operation, it has evolved from a preschool committee to one that has provided a greater focus upon all of the needs of the child care community. The committee and its working groups is staffed by a Child Care Coordinator, with funding for the position provided by the MCSS area office. The coordinator reports into the overall NYIACC structure, which allows for continuity and greater internal collaboration.

The committee provides opportunities for networking between service providers, education of the public through information, outreach and involvement, advocating for child care funding and ensuring a proactive stance regarding issues facing the child care community and outreach to the child care community. Members of the committee represent a wide range of service providers within the City of North York, including children's mental health centres, child welfare agencies, community colleges, boards of education, public health, children's services agencies and child care centres. The mandate of

this committee is currently being reviewed and evaluated to ensure that the focus of the group is consistant with and meets community needs.

The committee has accomplished a variety of tasks. Specifically, they have been able to develop several publications including a resource directory, early special needs identification kits and resource kits. Networking and information has reached the community via a newsletter and training or staff development opportunities.

The major project development that has been undertaken is the Child Care Support Team. This is a collaborative effort among several organizations, which offers support to child care centres across the city by several children's mental health centres. The purpose is to ensure early intervention with children and families with special needs through a variety of methods, including working with the staff of the centre to build skills and working with individual children.

The committee struggles on an ongoing basis with several issues, including how to ensure a coordinated and collaborative service delivery system when all organizations come from a variety of backgrounds and philosophies of service delivery. This has provided a challenging opportunity to look at the broader issues of ongoing and developing needs. It has also been important for this group to be aware of the various communities that exist within North York, as each has its own character and needs. In addition, since child care providers and parents are are not well represented on the committee, the committee's perceptions of service needs and delivery systems have been questioned.

At this point in time, the group is beginning to evaluate their activities and to ensure a plan for the future. It is hoped that they can become more proactive and provide long range vision for child care services within North York, while responding to emerging needs. This involves the need to connect more formally to all sectors of the child care community and with parents who use child care services.

Case Study #11: Informal Planning Group for Cumberland-Orleans
A project to develop a multi-service centre for French language child care services.

In the Cumberland-Orleans area, located near Ottawa, 49% of the 100,000 residents are francophone. Despite this high percentage, there are no unilingual francophone child care services, although the area does have some bilingual resource centre programs. A recent survey has indicated that there are children and families in the district and nearby areas who may need French-language services.

At the instigation of the MCSS-funded community development worker at the local Social Planning Council, a small informal group came together 18 months ago to conduct a child care needs assessment. The group consists primarily of parents with young children, although there is also a lawyer and two child care educators. A pre-school resource centre serves as the host for this project.

In order to economize, the planning group designed the questionnaire for the needs assessment and then employed a consultant to analyze the results. The group will write the final report. Based on the survey's findings, the planning group is beginning to develop a proposal for a multi-service centre, and will be negotiating with their municipality to obtain a building lot or 20% of the funding they require.

Their vision for the multi-service centre is that it would be a "hub" model with a resource centre, an emergency day care, a nursery and pre-school, and a large before- and after-school program. The model was chosen because it was best suited to their highly dispersed francophone population, and the committee decided it would be easier for parents to access services that were all in one location.

The group estimates that it may take two years to open the centre, given that this is a large project. However, they are enthusiastic and plan to incorporate at such time as their proposal is approved. They plan to consult with anglophone groups who have centres up and running, such as the only one which exists in their locality, or the one in Cumberland which has received approval. The group also plans to form a "consultation table" with two other proposed "hub" projects in Ottawa, Association des Services Présoclairs et Parasolairs d'Ottawa-

Carlton and Cité Collegial, to ensure duplication of services is avoided and proposals are well planned.

Case Study #12: The Child Care Working Group of York Region's Community Services Council (Newmarket)
A subcommittee of an integrated children's services group which has established provider and planning networks for centre- and school-based care.

York Region, just north of Metropolitan Toronto, has a population of 480,000, with 190 child care centres, 10 regulated home child care agencies, and 6 resource centres. Two of the resource centres have one-time funding. At present, there are 1140 subsidies in these programs, while the waiting list numbers 1900.[6] This region receives many requests for information on locating infant care. There is a current transition of demand from commercial to non-profit care in this region, and parents continue to be attracted by the notion of a "seamless day" in school-based centres.

The region has been typified by dramatic growth, rapidly changing needs and a proliferation of new boards of directors of child care programs. The emphasis has been developmental in attempting to keep up with the sheer number of new centres which have opened, let alone conduct planning with these groups. For example, in one year alone, the proportion of commercial centres went from 75% to 50%, while the proportion of non-profit centres has continued to increase. "In York Region, we didn't have time to go out and work with groups, we were so busy just getting centres established."

Since August 1988, 35 new centres have opened, at an average rate of 8 to 10 new centres per year, the majority being school-based. However, since the developmental work began in this region in 1988 with the first of two community development workers,[7] respondents mentioned three factors that are changing the community-based approach to planning. First, members are becoming aware that "there is a changing climate which is changing how we must do things"; second, "the community and providers are seeing the need to pull together"; and third, "there is major progress in finding common ground" [both in child care and children's services fields].

Three important working groups were established under the auspices of the Community Services Council. This council consists of representatives from various agencies, including those who deal with child care, special needs, mental health or family violence. These members were vested with decision-making authority from their parent organizations. There is a school-based committee and a child care working group with an ethnocultural subcommittee. A third working group has been structured to conduct liaisons with school boards. The general achievements of each and the links between the three working groups are described below.

Child Care Working Group (1988)

Along with the key task of establishing child care boards of directors, the broad mandate of this working group included both education and planning. Based on a 1989 needs assessment and a child care strategic plan they developed (supported by start-up funds and a grant for a short-term research position), the group identified a number of objectives, including the importance of raising political awareness on child care issues. To this end, the subcommittee has attempted to provide input on policy development at the provincial level (e.g. Provincial-Municipal Social Services Review, Children First) and make presentations to a number of municipal councils, as well as attempting to have child care integrated into all regional plans. Despite discovering that the provincial Planning Act needs revision to include child care, four municipalities--Vaughan, Markham, Richmond Hill and Whitchurch-Stouffville--now have child care provisions in their official plans and zoning bylaws.

In addition, they have established a Parent Resource Centre Network and a network of supervisors who have surveyed regional salaries and fees, and established a bulk buying program. They have also developed a manual for new operators. The group has had less success in establishing a network of chairpersons of boards, finding it difficult to arrange convenient meeting times for volunteers. They have, however, had great success in applying for federal Child Care Initiatives Funding, which allowed for the establishment of a 1-800 support line for parents wishing to locate child care.[8] Future plans would see the development of an Employment Registry to develop a list of available supply staff for centres in the area.

The group also developed and worked on plans for a central registry, information on special needs, a map of centre locations, periodic workshops on setting up a non-profit board which also provided contextual information about political and socio-economic environments, and a supervisors' network to trade information.

The group discovered that it was exceptionally difficult to establish new boards and provide the needed ongoing support at the same time. They found that boards needed a lot of information about resource availability, human resources, legal issues, information on board functioning, and team building among others, and that generally boards were very isolated. They also suggest that boards need ongoing monitoring, and recommend a tool be developed for mandatory periodic review of their activities, especially given the variation of needs across communities and the different planning responses that are required. The subcommittee found it very difficult to take an active role in public education while also meeting the demands for set-up.

The group commented that, while MCSS was a very helpful and constant facilitator to their planning function of proposal review, the number of people and points of ministerial approval are cumbersome. Their experience suggests that a one-stop or team review approach to proposals could help streamline unnecessary obstacles.

They continue to struggle with the problems of predicting future growth and demand for child care in this region. Despite access to a sophisticated model on predicting need, developed by a volunteer academic, they are tending to rely on indicators such as the number of single parents, housing project profiles, school building plans, etc. Another long-term goal will be striking a truly integrated Children's Services Advisory Committee with full representation to "plan in a holistic way for children."

The Ethnocultural Subcommittee

The Child Care Working Group has an ethnocultural subcommittee. A "cluster' of seven agencies who have committed themselves to the project are currently making funding arrangements with the provincial and federal governments to sponsor an initiative on "multicultural organizational change." This initiative, under the direction of an

existing Multicultural Service Coordinator position, will assist all the organizations in the cluster to promote accessibility for people of other nationalities and new immigrants, to promote culturally sensitive hiring practices, to reduce language barriers and to develop programs to suit each centre's needs.

School-Based Planning Committee (1990) and Liaison for Preschool and School Services Working Groups (1988)

Beginning in 1988, under the New Directions policy, MCSS became committed to developing new non-profit boards and to encourage parent participation in general. The School-Based Planning Committee was not developed until some time after the Child Care Working Group. Its original mandate was to assist with planning for child care in school, and one particular initiative was to develop non-profit boards of directors for programs in schools. Before such boards were established, planning was being carried out by groups connected to churches and housing co-ops.

In addition, a provincial announcement had outlined the intent to provide funding for the development of a child care centre in every new elementary school. Consequently, a new school-based planning sub-committee was struck to examine how to choose criteria for the development of school-based centres. The planning committee was convened because of their concern about the duplication of centres in separate and public schools which in some cases were almost next door to each other. Two community development workers were assigned to find groups to become boards for centres which were already built in schools.

Before 1988, the Preschool and School Services Working Group had collaborated on a number of kindergarten initiatives. The liaison group now includes school principals and representatives of community agencies as well as supervisors of centres, and is geared to facilitate the transition from pre-school to school and encourage parental involvement. The group is currently conducting two pilots, one in each school board, to incorporate curriculum, share resources, and integrate staff in the primary divisions with the pre-school.

A future planning challenge will be to ensure the continued viability of the many new centres, especially if they are under-enrolled, and to

examine the idea of developing designated neighbourhood child care centres to attach to older established schools without child care centres. Transportation to the designated centres would have to be provided as part of this approach. At present, only high schools are asked to rationalize their needs for new centres, while centres are routinely included in new elementary schools. If fewer new centres are added in the future, this "designated centre model" will become an important planning issue for the committee.

Case #13: Belleville Planning Groups
Five local stand-alone planning groups connected to local MCSS office in Belleville

MCSS program advisors in the Belleville office are currently working with five different stand-alone planning groups. Three of these are located in the county of Hastings, and the other two represent the counties of Prince Edward and Lennox-Addington.

The groups have each received received $2,000 to $10,000 in grants from MCSS Program Development Funds for administrative support, and each has received from $6,000 to $40,000 to conduct needs assessments. The five groups share some characteristics: their geographic proximity, their early stage of development, and the fact that MCSS encouraged the start-up of each group. All of them have negotiated a relationship with the MCSS local office in Belleville. Recently, each group has recognized that they may not need a formal amalgamation of activities to overcome the problems of working in isolation.

The population in the areas being planned for by these groups is approximately 100,000 for Hastings, 25,000 for Prince Edward, and 25,000 for Lennox-Addington. The latter two areas are primarily rural populations. Membership in the planning groups is generally from children's service agencies and child care providers; only two of the committees have political representatives.

While the oldest program is only two and a half years old, the remainder are truly in the infancy stage. Thus, they would not describe their work as integrated, although some members have links

on other committees such as children's mental health, social planning or community development, but prefer to say simply that they are "learning to work together, primarily as operators." Each works with a different program supervisor, although one MCSS program supervisor retains an informal advisory role to all five groups.

When New Directions was introduced, the local area office conducted a consultation and recognized the need to encourage community planning. MCSS met with a number of groups, advised on the necessity to work together, and three groups took on the task. Two more groups were added after MCSS began to receive proposals and funding applications and saw the need for community-based priorizing. MCSS provided each group with statements of their expectations for child care planning, e.g., to identify gaps, develop proposals for service provision or enrichment, conduct public education, take advocacy roles. Based on this, each group has now developed Terms of Reference and goals for their committees.

The program supervisor who works with all the groups noted their general and understandable reluctance to make funding decisions, first, because of the lack of completed needs assessment data or clear provincial criteria, and second, because they have advised MCSS that as service providers they feel it is often inappropriate to do so. However, they are comfortable with their task of ultimately setting service priorities for their localities. It was implied that a considerably higher representation from the general public or parents may be required on these planning bodies if such authority were given them.

General planning obstacles noted among the five groups include: 1) lack of clarity on what MCSS expects of them; 2) lack of clarity on "where all this planning is heading for communities," and 3) some sense of "reinventing the wheel" with regard to needs assessments, especially knowing that these have occurred all over the province. This is of particular concern, given local evidence that many volunteers were disillusioned by unsuccessful CSAG experiences.

Very positive developments are reported in that these groups now appear unified on the need and intent to collaborate to make better use of existing resources, especially in small towns where there is high competition for service provision. In addition, they are now ready to tackle particular issues of improving the state of planning for the rural

areas and promoting political involvement at the municipal level. They feel this progress will, in the end, better serve the needs of children.

Case #14: The North Bay Three-District Planning Groups: Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound
An experimental three-district approach to planning in the MCSS North Region.

The "North Bay District" includes the districts of Muskoka, Nipissing and Parry Sound. This case study is presented to describe why and how an amalgamated three-district approach to planning proved to be impractical for diverse community needs and planning stages.

Some of the particular planning issues for the North are well known: native demand is increasing, municipal demand is declining due to the recession, and it is difficult to equitably serve small programs which are isolated and scattered throughout tiny communities. The level of community involvement in small communities, however, is very high and can serve as a counterbalance to some of the geographic impediments.

This three-district planning effort began in 1988, following on the 1987 New Directions announcements which promised a large infusion of child care funding for these communities. An MCSS program supervisor, a program advisor, a member of a Children's Services Advisory Group and a community college representative met informally to consider how the communities could plan with these new dollars. Eventually, a planning group was organized in each of these districts,with the intent to work as a three-district group. In two of these groups, the child care group was a subcommittee of a existing Children's Services Advisory Group[9].

After working together for one and a half years to collaborate on needs assessments, develop plans and consult with their respective communities on tri-district goals, the three groups realized that each of the communities they planned for had very different "child care service needs[10] and planning realities" which made it difficult for the groups to progress in any concerted fashion. The MCSS staff,

working individually with each group, found that there was too much diversity to plan for the three districts aggregately, given that each group was at a different stage of planning. For example, it became very difficult to hold useful meetings of the chairs from each district when one group was actively engaged in planning, another was at the stage of getting established, and the third did not have the staff to proceed with the priorities of their committee. In addition, while goals were basically the same, it was difficult to take a concerted approach with each district facing unique child care issues. The geographic obstacles of getting everyone to meetings was also considered a major problem in the three-district approach.

Today, MCSS has a separate funding agreement with each group, which specifies their individual goals and objectives. Overall, MCSS is attempting to promote the importance of parent involvement and the integrated approach to planning for all children's services, while recognizing the importance of being able to provide resources to support such planning. Their experience with the three groups suggests that it may be worth considering a broader or more inclusive planning model.

The Muskoka Child Care Group is a subcommittee of an umbrella community services planning group, which is currently restructuring with the intent of becoming incorporated with its own board. As one of its activities, the child care subcommittee is planning for a new school in their locality to which a child care program will be attached. This committee has also completed a before- and after-school needs study. The District Municipality administers funds for one support person to the committee.

The Parry Sound Children's Services Advisory Group (CSAG), of which the child care group is a subcommittee, has just undergone a Ministerial review, and continues to grapple with the challenge of planning for a population scattered over many small communities in a very large geographic area. This has presented organizational problems not just in travelling to meetings, but also in finding locations for those meetings. At present, this group is disbanding in favour of a new model. While this is being developed, planning for child care is being done by a group of providers, who are focusing particularly on special needs.[11] New planning will be their next step.

The group may also work with the Equity Committee of the CSAG, which has just concluded that the area is under-served with regard to funding allocations for child care, licensed spaces for special needs children, and special services at home. They will also be trying to obtain a new resource teacher to serve all programs in the area.

The Nipissing District group, handicapped by inadequate staffing, has disbanded and a child care program supervisor has helped to develop the Nipissing Child Care Council. One-time funding has been obtained to get a staff person to "do the legwork and carry the ball".

While there is some thought of organizing an annual meeting of the three districts to focus on a current interest in environmental scanning and models for thinking about resource distribution, the organizers believe this experience has important lessons for other groups. They advise that the "pace and level of each group" must be respected, with work proceeding with each group in an individual fashion, according to local needs.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS SUGGESTED BY KEY INFORMANTS

Based on our discussions with the "case study" groups, a core set of questions have been revised and added to by our respondents. These questions, outlined below, are provided in order to help structure, but not to limit the discussion on community-based planning for child care services. Groups are encouraged to address any other related questions they think pertinent to the consultation.

1. What do you think the mandate of child care planning groups should be? Which of the following points should be included?

   Serving as a resource to planning:

   - interagency coordination
   - public education
   - training, staff development
   - identifying key child care issues for a community
   - designing needs assessments
   - preparing an annual service plan
   - conducting annual reviews of activities/accomplishments
   - reviewing proposals
   - advocacy

   Making planning decisions:

   - strategic planning
   - determination of levels and types of services needed

- setting service priorities
- deciding on allocations
- responsibility for implementation of plans

2. What is needed to ensure the mandate/role/authority of these groups is consistently recognized in their own communities?

3. What do you think the mandate/role of the provincial government should be as it relates to these planning groups?

4. Who should sit on community-based planning groups (as they relate to child care)?

5. How should these planning groups be organized? What models would work best?

6. What linkages, formal or otherwise, should be established with other planning groups? (e.g. Children's Services planning groups, District Health Councils, social planning councils, etc.?) Should they be linked into broader planning activities? How should special needs be addressed as part of the planning process?

7. How could groups link with school boards? With regional governments?

8. Should local child care planning be made mandatory? Who should be responsible? Municipal governments or special-purpose bodies such as school boards?

9. Does any of this planning activity require legislative or regulatory support or changes?

10. How can quality indicators for child care be built into the outcome expectations for the planning groups themselves?

11. How can communities ensure that parents have a meaningful involvement in this planning? How would this influence the nature/outcome of the planning? Should other persons in the child's network also be involved, e.g. grandparents, teachers?

12. What could the province do to support this activity, or what kinds of support should the government be expected to provide for non-profit community boards?

- Technical support
  (e.g. data/information systems, proposal writing, information on allocation procedures and process)
- Financial support
  (e.g. for start-up planning/for administration of planning)
- Strategic planning
  (e.g. environmental planning on trends in child care, social policy as it relates to children, trends in cost-effectiveness, the economy)
- Training for planners
- Specialized planning support
  (e.g. professional development, team building, board functioning, liability insurance, organizing around variations in working hours, methods for priority setting and allocating funds)
- Information on planning models
- Planning methodologies
- Needs assessment or other research methodologies
  (e.g. preparing terms of reference)
- Help in understanding provincial policies or policy direction
- Networking with other groups
- Feeding into provincial policy-making

APPENDIX A:
RESEARCH INSTRUMENT - SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON MODELS FOR LOCAL MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING:
A SERIES OF CASE STUDIES
PREPARED AS BACKGROUND FOR
THE CHILD CARE CONSULTATION IN ONTARIO

Hello. My name is _____ and I am calling from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (corporate) in Toronto. I was given your name by _____ in the Child Care Branch of our Ministry, who thought you would be a good person to speak to on a background paper for the public consultation we are planning for the New Year. Are you familiar with the planned consultation? (If no, explain.) *The background paper will show how ten or so localities approach their planning for child care, and we thought this was important because planning is one of the issues we'd like to discuss in the consultation. These case studies will be used to make sure we've addressed all the important issues, and to highlight some of the broad questions we'd like people to think about before they come to the consultation. Would it be all right if we used your group as a case study?* (Clarify this is the chair, or someone with knowledge of their functioning.) *We would not identify you by name, but only by the title of your position.* (If approval required: *"When could I call back to confirm?"*) *Could I ask you some questions now? This will take about half an hour. If it is not convenient now, when could I call back?*

(If contacts need to verify interviewer's identity, have them call the Child Care Branch, MCSS Toronto, at 327-4869, or the area office contact. Also inform them of the consultation hot line should they wish specific information.)

Before I begin, would you like to take a minute to get organized?

When we talk about the "locality" you plan for, what area does that cover? _____

What is the population? _____

How many child care centres would be included? _____

How many family day programs? _____

How many resource centres or resource teacher programs? _____

Other descriptive information: _____

1. In your locality, which group does this kind of planning? _____

2. a) How would this group be described?

Social Planning Council ☐
Child Care Planning Group ☐
Children's Services Advisory or Planning Group ☐
Other local board ☐ (specify) _____

b) What other planning bodies are you linked with?

None ☐
MCSS Local Office ☐
Social Planning Council ☐
DHC ☐
Other local planning group ☐ _____
Other broad integrated planning group ☐ _____

c) Do you receive funding from an outside source? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, specify source and amount.
How much funding do you receive from:

MCSS $ _____
Other Gov't $ _____ (specify) _____
Other source $ _____ (specify) _____

d) Affiliation: County ☐
Regional ☐
Other ☐ (specify) _____

3. Who is represented on your group, and what kind of backgrounds do these people have?

_____

_____

4. Does your group have a written description of its mandate? _____

If no, is there an informal mandate? _____

5. Can you describe this mandate briefly?

_____

_____

Was this mandate always clear to the group? _____

Who developed this mandate? _____

6. How long has this group been meeting? _____

7. How did it get started? Was there anything specific that got the group going?

_____

_____

8. Do you know if any people in your child care planning group are also on some other planning groups? (Specify membership from parent or other organizations.)

_____

9. Are any of the group members vested with decision-making authority from their parent organization?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, specify: _____

10. Is anyone in charge of coordinating all the players in your group? (Identify leadership.)

_____

11. Could you describe some of the activities and decisions your group has been involved in? Do you, for example, address:

	YES	NO
Interagency coordination	☐	☐
Information sharing	☐	☐
Needs assessments	☐	☐
Coordination of services	☐	☐
Kinds of services offered	☐	☐
Financial allocations	☐	☐
Base levels of funding	☐	☐
Optional expenditures from base	☐	☐
Setting service priorities	☐	☐
Developing publications, handbooks	☐	☐
Strategic planning	☐	☐
Public education	☐	☐
Training/staff development	☐	☐
Research	☐	☐
Recommending allocations or reallocations to area offices	☐	☐
Others? New projects underway?	☐	☐

12. *(If the group is involved in integrated planning)*
Can you describe some of the practical impacts that integrated planning has had in your community? (e.g. money saved, better decisions)

_____

_____

13. Can you describe some of the obstacles that your group has come up against in doing its planning? Have these obstacles affected the quality of child care?

_____

_____ _____

14. On a scale of 1 to 5, how well would you say your group is working?

VERY POOR				EXCELLENT
1	2	3	4	5

15. Again on a scale of 1 to 5, how much impact would you say your group has made in this community?

VERY LITTLE				A GREAT DEAL
1	2	3	4	5

16. What would you say is the most exciting thing your group has been able to do?

_____

_____

_____

17. What was the most difficult thing your group has done? What supports might have helped?

_____

_____

_____

18. Have you used any data, projections, or models of particular interest in your planning?

_____

_____

_____

I'd like to ask what planning issues or questions you would want to raise if you were advising the provincial government. Before I do that, can I run through the following with you?

19. Does your group have any short or medium-term documented plan?

---

20. Can you describe any future plans you might have for your group? What do you see especially with regards to other children's, social and educational services?

---

21. Before I end, could I run through this list of consultation questions we have been developing, to see if you have any comments?

- What do you think the mandate of child care planning groups should be?

- What kind of support is required by groups who do child care planning? (technical, financial, etc.)

- Does any of this planning activity require legislative or regulatory support or changes?

- How can quality indicators in child care be built into outcome expectations for Board performance?

- Who should sit on child care planning groups?

- How should these planning groups be organized?

- What linkages, formal or otherwise, should be established with other planning groups? (e.g. DHCs, municipalities, school boards, children's services planning groups)

- Should local child-care planning be mandatory?

- How can communities ensure that parents have meaningful involvement in this planning?

Thank you very much for your time. May I contact you again if I have any follow-up questions?

YES	NO
☐	☐

Can we check that I have your correct mailing address so I can send you these results?

_____

May I also place you on the mailing list for the child care consultation document?

_____

Would you like to be contacted about other ways you could be involved in the consultation?

YES	NO
☐	☐

APPENDIX B: LIST OF RESPONDENTS[12]

Belleville's 5 Local Planning Groups

Pat Tretina
Program Advisor
Ministry of Community and Social Services
Belleville Child Care Unit
199 Dundas St. East
Belleville, K8N 1E2

County of Frontenac and City of Kingston Children's Services Coordination and Advisory Group

Mary Goldbourn
Program Assistant
Interagency Council for Children
370 King St. West
Kingston, K7K 2X4

Kris Colwell
Coordinator, ECE Program
St. Lawrence College
Box 6000
Kingston, K7K 5A6

Cumberland-Orleans Informal Planning Group:

Ginette Duclos
Community Development Worker
Ottawa Social Planning Council
256 King Edward Avenue
Ottawa K1N 7M1

Durham College Child Care Advisory Committee

Mary Lynne West-Moines
Chair, Advisory Group
c/o Durham College
400 Monarch Avenue, Unit 8
Ajax, L1F 3W6

Fort William First Nation Band Day Care Centre Committee

Rochelle Johnson
Band Manager
P.O. Box 786
Thunder Bay, P7C 4W6

Lanark County Child Care Planning Group

Brenda Sissons
Chair
R.R. #2
Lanark, K0G 1K0

Maureen Starr-Ellis
Child Care Development Worker
Lanark Children's Services
Coordinating and Planning Group
P.O. Box 573
Smiths Falls, K7A 4T6

Leeds-Grenville Children's Services Advisory Group

Jill Porter
Coordinator
Leeds-Grenville Children's Services Advisory Group
Box 1822
Brockville, K6V 6K8

London Short-Term Advisory Group on Child Care Planning

Lynn Thorne
Association of Early Childhood
Educators of Ontario
London Branch
Member, Advisory Group
254 Pall Mall Street, Ste. 101
London, N6A 5P6

Margaret Hoff
ECE Faculty, Room D3017
Fanshaw College
P.O. Box 4005
London, M5W 5H1

Newmarket Community Network of Child Care Programs
Child Care Working Group of York Region Community Services Council

Leona Rodell (former community development worker)
c/o Harbourfront Community Centre
627 Queen's Quay
Toronto, M5V 3G3

Patricia Reid
Children's Services Coordinator
Community Services Council
390 Davis Drive, Suite 301
Newmarket, L3Y 2N9

Lisa Macey
Community Network of Child Care Programs
7 Edithvale Drive
North York, M2N 2R4

North Bay 3-District Planning Groups (Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound)

Ruth Wells
Regional Child Care Coordinator
MCSS Northern Regional Office
2nd Floor, 473 Queen St. East
Sault Ste. Marie, P6A 125

Monique Legault
Program Supervisor
c/o MCSS Local Office
3 Beechwood Drive
Parry Sound, P2A 1J2

Maggie Ringling
Muskoka Community Services Planning Group
Box 1640
Bracebridge, P1L 1W5

North Hastings Children's Services Board

Donna O'Sullivan
Executive Director
North Hastings Children's Services Board
Bancroft, K0L 1C0

North York Interagency and Community Council: Child Care Coordinating Committee

Karen Lieberman
Child Care Coordinator
North York Interagency and Community Council
7 Edithvale Drive
North York, M2N 2R4

Rochelle Fine
Dellcrest Children's Centre
1645 Sheppard Ave. West
Downsview, M3M 2X4

Pembroke and Area Children's Services Planning Committee:

Selita Steinberg, Director (former Community Development Worker, North Bay)
Wise Owl Day Care Centre
151 Isabella Street
Pembroke, K8A 5S8

Debra Metzger
Acting Chair
Pembroke and Area Children's Services Planning Committee
c/o Family Enrichment Network
141 Lake Street
Pembroke, K8A 3K2

Donna Winnicot
Algonquin College
315 Pembroke St. East
Pembroke, K8A 3K2

Peterborough Child Care Forum

Janet Castle
Executive Director
Kawartha Child Care Services
469 Water Street
Peterborough, K9H 3M2

Anne Cox
Executive Director
Peterborough Children's Services Group
3248-380 Armour Rd., Ste. 245
Peterborough, K9H 7O7

APPENDIX C: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ENDNOTES

1. At least one member from each planning group has reviewed these reports for accuracy. MCSS apoligizes for any errors or omissions.

2. For example, many of the localities described higher vacancy rates despite rising demand for infant care and subsidies. Rural areas continue to have problems with accessibility and transportation.

3. This perspective may also be related to the level of consumer representation on committees. Some have suggested that the level of parent representation would have to be increased to achieve more impartial decision-making on service proposals.

4. These services include District Health Councils, the United Way, municipalities, and mental health, developmental services, family violence, prevention, special needs and child abuse agencies.

5. The application to MCSS for the full-time community development worker was completed jointly with another Children's Services Group subcommittee, the Early Childhood Education Committee.

6. This may in part be a reflection of the disproportionately high number of young families and the high birth rate in this region.

7. The child care subcommittee of the Community Services Council initially hired one worker, then a year and a half later the workload had increased so much that a second worker was hired. Much later, a third worker provided assistance to the school-based subcommittee.

8. The group also receives core funding under the Child and Family Services Act, as well as the CCIF funds from Health and Welfare for the 2-year phone line project, and funds from the Ontario Health Promotion Fund for Youth, in addition to funding obtained for their ethnocultural initiatives from MCSS Bridging Initiative, Secretary of State Canada, and Ministry of Citizenship for Multicultural Initiatives.

9. At the time of this meeting, only Parry Sound and Muskoka still had Children's Services Advisory Groups; the North Bay group had folded.

10. For example, one district has three segregated regional special needs programs and is attempting to integrate these into one. Another has a single resource teacher attached to different programs, and a third has yet another model of delivery.

11. The Parry Sound experie is that it has been more productive to work on one issue at a time. For example, a recent proposal review process on special needs allocations was conducted by MCSS, which suggested the need to focus on this issue from the child care perspective.

12. For each planning group, one or more MCSS program supervisors or advisor were also interviewed.